

# NOTE ON BROMIDE OF ETHYL AS AN ANÆSTHETIC.

By SIDNEY F. WILCOX, M.D.,

OF NEW YORK,

SURGEON TO THE LAURA FRANKLIN FREE HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN.

**I**N THE ANNALS OF SURGERY for November, 1890, appears an abstract of a lecture by Haderup on the above subject, which inclines me to give the results of my experience with this anæsthetic.

I have used it many times in operations on children at the Laura Franklin Free Hospital for children, in this city, and thus far have had no dangerously disagreeable experience with it. I have also used it in private practice to some extent generally on children, but have tried it two or three times on adults. The preparation preferred, and the one most frequently employed, has been Merck's and that in my hands has been found the most reliable.

My first experience in its use was with an adult in which it was given during the application of a very strong galvanic current for relief of hæmorrhage caused by fibro-myoma of the uterus. In this case it worked well, the patient being kept under perfect narcosis for about ten minutes. No nausea or other disagreeable symptom followed its administration. In other adult cases I have not found it to work so well, and have usually failed to produce complete anæsthesia. This I have attributed to the nervous state of the patient.

With children, however, the result has been different. Narcosis is quickly and completely induced and easily maintained, and one peculiar feature which I have noticed is, that after the patient has been once completely under its influence he may be allowed to come out and while apparently perfectly con-

scious, will lie quiet with his eyes open and even able to answer questions, he does not seem to feel any pain and the last steps of an operation may be completed with the patient in a state of painless consciousness.

Anæsthesia is generally complete within a minute but the patient will come out of it almost as quickly. The return to consciousness being more like the waking from a sound sleep. Usually a few drops is all that is required to produce anæsthesia and I seldom have more than 15 or 20 drops applied to the inhaler at once. The inhaler which I employ is simply a tight cap made from a newspaper and a towel, and at first the patient is allowed a few breaths of mixed air and the bromide of ethyl vapor. Then the cap is placed down close over the face as with sulphuric ether. I have never noticed any particular effect on the heart's action. Vomiting is frequently produced.

In my cases it has been given usually for short operations and for dressing painful wounds in very restive children and the duration of the anæsthetic state lasting from 2 to 15 minutes.

From my experience I am much inclined to favor its use in such cases where it is necessary to produce the anæsthetic state in a child for a short time, but for adults I have not as a rule, found it powerful enough to produce the desired effect.